MOTETS AND SONGS FROM THIRTEENTH-CENTURY FRANCE

THE MARRIAGE OF HEAVEN AND HELL

GOTHIC VOICES CHRISTOPHER PAGE

hyperion

THE MARRIAGE OF HEAVEN AND HELL

Motets and songs from thirteenth-century France

1	Je ne chant pas / Talens m'est pris / APTATUR / OMNES	*a b d e*	[2'19]
2	Trois sereurs / Trois sereurs / Trois sereurs / PERLUSTRAVIT	*b c d e*	[2'11]
3	BLONDEL DE NESLE (*fl* 1180–1200) En tous tans que vente bise	*a*	[2'50]
4	Plus bele que flors / Quant revient / L'autrier jouer / FLOS FILIUS EIUS	*a b c d*	[1'15]
5	Par un matinet / Hé, sire ! / Hé, bergier ! / EIUS	*b c d e*	[4'37]
6	De la virge Katerine / Quant froidure / Agmina milicie / AGMINA	*a b c e*	[2'15]
7	COLIN MUSET (*fl c*1200–1250) Trop volentiers chanteroie	*a*	[3'44]
8	Ave parens / Ad gratie / AVE MARIA	*a b d*	[1'35]
9	Super te Jerusalem / Sed fulsit virginitas / PRIMUS TENOR / DOMINUS	*a b c d*	[1'10]
10	A vous douce debonnaire	*b*	[3'08]
11	Mout souvent / Mout ai esté en dolour / MULIERUM	*b c d*	[2'50]
12	BERNART DE VENTADORN (1125–1195) Can vei la lauzeta mover	*d*	[3'43]
13	Quant voi l'aloete / Diex! je ne m'en partiré ja / NEUMA	*b c d*	[1'52]
14	En non Dieu / Quant voi la rose / NOBIS	*b c d*	[2'41]
15	GAUTIER DE DARGIES (*c*1165–after 1236) Autres que je ne sueill fas	*b*	[4'01]
16	Je m'en vois / Tels a mout / OMNES	*a b f*	[2'40]
17	Festa januaria	*b c d*	[2'18]

GOTHIC VOICES

MARGARET PHILPOT alto (a)
ROGERS COVEY-CRUMP tenor (b)
RUFUS MÜLLER tenor (c)
LEIGH NIXON tenor (d)
STEPHEN CHARLESWORTH baritone (e)

directed by

CHRISTOPHER PAGE medieval harp (f)

CONTENTS

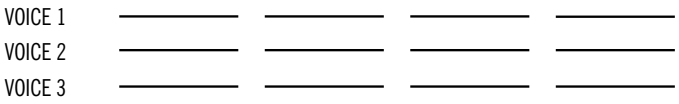
ENGLISH *page 4*

Sung texts and translation *page 7*

FRANÇAIS *page 17*

OUR COVER shows a young cleric, perhaps a student at the university of Paris, offering money to a girl who, to judge by the drum in her hand, is off to take part in a ring-dance, or *carole*. To the left stands a libidinous demon, while to their right a friar holds an open book of the Old Testament and raises his hand in warning. This Parisian picture is a fine emblem of the music on this record: the motet of the thirteenth century. Like the student and the girl, the motet of the years between 1200 and 1300 was caught between the lure of the secular and the summons of the sacred—between Heaven and Hell. Although it developed from the liturgical music of Paris, the motet form has come down to us with texts of every kind: some devout, some lascivious, some facetious, some wistfully romantic. The music, we may be sure, often has something in common with the songs of the ring-dances, the *caroles*.

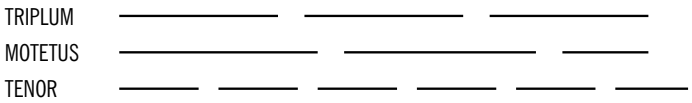
It is often music of marvellous daring. To sense what was revolutionary in these pieces between 1210 and 1240 or so, listen to a conductus like *Festa januaria* [17] or any of the polyphonic conducti featured on the Gothic Voices recording *Music for the Lion-Hearted King*. Those pieces are generally shaped in this way:



Schematic representation of a section of a three-part conductus

This diagram emphasizes that each voice in a polyphonic conductus sings musical phrases of the same length, the phrases entering and leaving together and constantly tending towards units of four beats. This happens because a polyphonic conductus is essentially a strictly measured recitation of one Latin text by two, three or four voices, often a text cast in accentual lines of four stresses.

The motet, which emerged around 1200 and had eclipsed the conductus by 1300, followed a different set of principles:



Schematic representation of a section of a three-part motet

As this diagram shows, the Tenor part of a motet (so called from Latin *tenere*, meaning 'to hold', because the Tenor part 'held' the piece together) was often arranged in short, stereotyped rhythmic units that were constantly repeated. This Tenor was usually a section of plainchant, whence the Latin cues in the titles of the motets recorded here. These cues, generally present (but not always correctly identified) in the sources, indicate the word or syllable which originally bore the Tenor melody in the chant.

Now all of this may seem a sad decline from the humane ideals of the conductus; there the Tenor was usually an expansive and melodious part, freshly made by a composer striving to produce (in the words of one thirteenth-century musician) 'as beautiful a melody as he can make'. This only shows how paradoxical changes in artistic style can be, for the technique of iterating rhythmic units in a small section of plainchant excited the imagination of composers in a powerful way, and hundreds of motets have survived which use this technique. Above all, perhaps, this Tenor organization helps to give the motet its characteristic sense of being suspended in time; we hear that the piece is advancing, and yet the Tenor, exercising many subtle controls over the register and content of the upper parts, keeps circling in one place, refusing to develop.

There is another revolutionary concept embodied in the above diagram of motet structure: an overlap of musical phrases. This represents a reaction against the style and sound of the conductus, for motet style exploits the delicious sense of forward movement—and of lilt—when a voice brings a phrase to an end just as a phrase in another voice is beginning.

A further difference between the conductus and the motet is that in a conductus the voices sing the same words, but in a motet each texted voice has words of its own. Sometimes, indeed, the parts of a motet carry texts which treat different subjects in different languages (track [6], for example). This produces a sound-picture quite unlike that of a conductus where all the vowels—and all the vowel changes—are synchronized. We might say that in a conductus the changes in the harmony of the music are dramatized by abrupt and unanimous changes in the harmonics of the sound (to sing a vowel is to set the vocal tract in a way that will privilege certain

partials in the note). In the motet, however, a chord may contain two, three or four distinct vowels, and since the texts are different there are no simultaneous changes of vowel timbre. Indeed, synchronization of vowel colour is so rare in the motet that it becomes a special artistic device, as at the end of track 13, where a motet is brought to a decisive close as both the Triplum and the Motetus sing the word 'amorete', or as in several other items where syllables of the same of similar sound are cunningly placed at the same point in all the voices.

A principal result of this contrast is that the conductus lends itself very well to a forthright declamation; the unanimity of vowel timbre produces a bright set of primary shades. The motet, however, often possesses a more veiled sound in performance since the primary colours of the vowels are mixed together, and the more one mixes colours the more opaque the shade becomes.

THE MILIEU OF THE MOTET

This kind of music should not be performed before the general populace for they do not understand its subtlety, nor do they delight in hearing it, but [let it only be performed] before the learned and before those who are seeking for subtleties in the arts.

So says Johannes de Grocheio in his *De musica* of *c*1300. Johannes adored Paris; leaving his Norman home, where the great town fairs were the principal distractions in a province of vast fields and seigneurial castles, he found in Paris a great city where 'the bread of the world was baked'. This saying, a common one in the 1200s, conveyed more than an assurance that all was well in the wharves and markets by the Seine; it embodied a proud claim that Paris supplied all Europe with the most rigorous theology and the most prudent legal advice. Between 1200 and 1300 the Parisians also provided Europe with the most inventive polyphonic music. As far as we can tell, the motet as represented on this recording was a Parisian creation, and these pieces would originally have been performed either in Paris or in the Parisian circles of men who had spent some time in the schools before returning home or to their religious community. They might be friars, perhaps, who had studied at the expense of their order, or members of a cathedral chapter gathered in some house in the close. As Johannes de Grocheio says, motets were for the learned; in other words they were not for the people who thronged the churches of St Gervase and St Leufroy on the great feasts—not for the tanners, carpenters and apothecaries.

This is all very well, but there is something suspicious about the idea—a common one today—that motets were only for intellectuals and connoisseurs. For one thing, it is an idea with a tinge of anachronism; we run the risk of confusing the medieval musician with the twentieth-century stereotype of the composer as intellectual, experimenting with dissonance to produce intense miniatures for the discerning few. Let us remember that the texts of motets are often in the vernacular and would have been intelligible to any tanner or apothecary; what is more, the lively texts and melodies of many voice-parts in motets probably had something in common with the idiom of the dance songs, the *caroles*, which the students, tradesmen and girls of Paris celebrated on the fields of St Germain (it is a near certainty that snatches of dance songs, both text and music, are quoted in some motets). In short, while it is true that the motet repertoire contains many musical subtleties for the discerning listener, we miss much of the pleasure which they can give if we fail to recognize that their characteristic tone is often poised, to borrow a good phrase from Chaucer, betwixt 'earnest and game'.

MELODY AND PERFORMANCE

Part of the 'game' lies in the melodic fluency of many of these pieces; they offer lyrical, vocal melodies of an instantly accessible kind. The melodies are highly variable in character, needless to say, but in general they are ingratiating, are beautifully judged to lie in the best part of the voice, and are so delightfully phrased that they embody all the qualities so often celebrated in motet poetry, being *cler* and *legier*. Often, in performing these motets, the singer can be moved by the sheer lilt of the music, a quality not usually associated with thirteenth-century polyphony of any kind.

It was certainly a daring step to combine two—or even three—such melodies, each with its own text, in one composition. How was one supposed to listen to such a piece? It has

been suggested that a motet challenged the listener to follow all the texts at the same time, but that seems unlikely. The comprehensibility of even one text is reduced when we hear it sung, for word-bearing melody has the power to weaken the discursive attention that we usually bring to language when we see it written or hear it said. If two texts are sung simultaneously then full comprehension of each becomes well-nigh impossible and was perhaps not the principal source of delight; the pleasure comes from the sense of sheer diversity and invention that we receive when the ear discerns a moment of one text, now a moment of another, amidst the kaleidoscope of vowel colours. Achieving brightness of vowel timbre, indeed, is a cardinal matter in performing these motets, not only because of the tendency to a certain veiled quality which is present in all polytextual music, but also because vowel colour in a motet is a crucial part of each melodic line's assertion of independence.

In this recording we have tried to emphasize the melodic aspect of these pieces by performing some of the motets in 'layers', presenting one or all of the voices separately, with or without the Tenor, and then assembling them. This practice is not mentioned in any source contemporary with the music but it accords with the sequential nature of the texts in tracks 2, 5 and 9 (although in the case of track 9 we have opted for a simultaneous performance only). When this technique is employed for a substantial piece such as track 5 the effect is to create an experience of music and poetry in which monophonic melody, polyphony, lyric poetry and narrative sense come together into something much larger—and much more varied—than anything suggested by the appearance of the piece in a modern edition. This style of performance can be extended to motets whose poems do not call for sequential presentation; as the individual parts unfold by themselves, we delight both in them and in the anticipation of the final result.

MOTETS AND TROUVÈRE SONG

It has often been suggested that the French poetry of motets is 'derived from the poetry of the trouvères' and so on, but judgements of that sort hide more than they reveal. Granted, the love celebrated in motet verse often sounds like the *amor* of the troubadours and trouvères—love as suffering, the lady as physician, and so on—but that was how one spoke of love in Old French poetry, both lyric and narrative; there was no other way. Instead of mistakenly seeking to trace the origins of motet poetry to the trouvères we should rather linger over the differences between the French motet and the trouvère *chanson*. Before *c*1240 very few trouvères of note composed poems like those given here for the French motets; compare the songs by Blondel de Nesle or Gautier de Dargies with any of the French motet texts and the contrasts begin to emerge. Trouvère poems are usually made from a set of identical stanzas, not from a single verse paragraph with lines of widely varied length; they rhyme according to a strict pattern, not in an opportunistic way; their rhyming is essentially discreet, not noisy with the iterated sounds of the front vowels 'i' and 'e'; trouvère songs in the High Style are lyrics, not narratives or semi-narratives of shepherds and their rustic loves. The motet poems, in contrast, display all of the features which the trouvère songs do not have, and they wed this essentially light-courtly poetry to a learned musical technique. Compare, for example, the classic troubadour song by Bernart de Ventadorn, *Can vei la lauzeta mover* 12 with the motet voice whose text is initially based upon it 13; where Bernart is expansive and serious, the motet voice is light and tripping. There is not the least indication in thirteenth-century sources that contemporary musicians would have regarded the large monophonic *chanson* of the troubadours and trouvères as a slight form beside the polyphonic motet; on the contrary, trouvère songs in the best style were increasingly associated in the thirteenth century with the memory of aristocratic trouvères of the first generation—Gace Brulé, for example, or Gautier de Dargies; our Parisian witness who spoke of the motet, Johannes de Grocheio, rules that trouvère songs should be performed for a royal and princely audience. According to the understanding of vernacular song which developed in twelfth- and thirteenth-century France, the vernacular motets, with their tendency to short-range melodic patterns, chirping rhymes and the rest, were inherently light and unserious; the pleasing paradox was that their 'game' was wedded to a musical technique that was very much in 'earnest'.

CHRISTOPHER PAGE © 1990

All parts of motets are sung simultaneously unless otherwise indicated. The texts are usually laid out in descending order of parts (Quadruplum—Triplum—Motetus—Tenor) unless a 'layered' performance is used following narrative sense; in that case the parts are presented in the order in which they are sung.

1 Je ne chant pas / Talens m'est pris / APTATUR / OMNES

This four-part piece reminds us that there is no such thing as a typical motet. The contrast between the chattering Triplum and the slower-moving Motetus is a text-book feature of the motet genre, as are the overlapping phrases, yet here they are combined with two Tenors! This piece also shows how the speed of the Tenor relative to the upper parts affects the impetus and indeed the entire character of a motet, for here the Tenors move rapidly, constantly repeating the same six measures of music, giving the piece a considerable thrust. The four-part motets of the thirteenth century have often been regarded as imperfect, over-ambitious works; this recording, which features a high proportion of such pieces, is an attempt to rehabilitate the four-part motet.

Performance order
I *Motetus* ROGERS COVEY-CRUMP + APTATUR / OMNES
II All parts

Triplum
Je ne chant pas per renvoiserie
ne par jolieté,
car trop m'ont amors longuement grevé,
et s'ai je tous jours bonement enduré,
n'onques ne mi vi d'amours servir lassé,
si le m'a, ce m'est avis,
trop mal guerredonné,
car nul secours ne nul confort n'ai encore trouvé
a ma douce dame,
en cui sont nuit et jour tuit mi pensé.
Las ! si mal la vi,
quant ele m'a refusé !
Car pour s'amour sui en doulour et en grieté,
s'en ai souvent souspiré ;
car ja ne me verrai gari
dou mal que j'ai ;
qu'autre de li
ne mi puet donner santé.

I do not sing from cheerfulness
or gaiety,
for love has made me suffer so long,
and yet I have always endured it willingly,
and have never been weary of serving love,
though it seems to me
that I have been very poorly rewarded;
for I have not yet found any help or comfort
from my sweet lady,
who occupies all my thought night and day.
Alas! she was my undoing
when she refused me!
For love of her I suffer grief and pain,
and have heaved many a sigh;
I will never see myself cured
of this complaint,
for none but she
can restore me to health.

Motetus
Talens m'est pris de chanter
pour celi que j'ai tant amee;
Dieus ! tant mi plaist a remirer
son cors gent et sa face coulouree
que je ne la puis oublier
nuit ne jour,
mais sans sejour
me convient a li penser ;
et si n'os a li parler
ne dire ma doulour.
Las ! par ma folour
mit tient li maus que je ne puis endurer,
si sai bien que je mourrai des maus d'amer.

I wish to sing
for the sake of her I have loved so long;
God! I find such pleasure
in looking at her fair body and her rosy face
that I cannot forget
her night or day,
but must constantly
be thinking of her;
and yet I dare not speak to her
or tell her of my torment.
Alas! through my foolishness I am constrained
by my unbearable pain, and I am sure
I will die of the pangs of love.

APTATUR / OMNES

2 Trois sereurs / Trois sereurs / Trois sereurs / PERLUSTRAVIT

Here is a striking approach to the challenge of composing a motet. The texts are very similar in technique, vocabulary and tone, but the musical settings of the poems, while homogeneous in style, go their own way when sung together and fight for mastery. The level of dissonance is high (the last musical phrase unwinds a string of major seconds between the Triplum and the Quadruplum). This motet exploits a technique which is explored (in a much more spacious way) in track 6 below: a section where all the voices phrase and rest together is followed by one where the voices overlap and tangle. Like many motet texts, these three set us wondering about their literary tone. As I read it, the tone of these poems—as of so much pastoral and semi-pastoral poetry in the motet—is wistful (certainly not giving way to boistrous merriment) and even a touch melancholic.

Performance order
I *Motetus* LEIGH NIXON
II *Triplum* RUFUS MÜLLER
III *Quadruplum* ROGERS COVEY-CRUMP
IV All parts

Motetus

Trois sereurs sor rive mer	*Three sisters on the seashore*
chantent cler.	*sing clearly.*
L'ainnee dit a :	*The eldest said:*
« On doit bien bele dame amer	*'One should love a beautiful lady,*
et s'amor garder	*and he who has her love*
cil qui l'a. »	*should cherish it.'*

Triplum

Trois sereurs sor rive mer	*Three sisters on the seashore*
chantent cler.	*sing clearly.*
La mainnee a apelé	*The younger called*
Robin son ami :	*for Robin, her love:*
« Prise m'avez el bois ramé ;	*'You took me from the leafy wood;*
reportez m'i ! »	*take me back there!'*

Quadruplum

Trois sereurs sor rive mer	*Three sisters on the seashore*
chantent cler.	*sing clearly.*
La jonete	*The youngest one*
fu brunete,	*was dark,*
de brun ami s'aati :	*and had chosen a dark lover:*
« Je sui brune, s'avrai brun ami ausi. »	*'I am dark, so I will have a dark lover as well.'*

PERLUSTRAVIT

BLONDEL DE NESLE

3 En tous tans que vente bise

En tous tans que vente bise,	*Whenever the breeze blows,*
pour cele dont sui soupris,	*my heart becomes dark and sombre*
qui n'est pas de moi souprise,	*on account of her whom I love,*
devient mes cuers noirs et bis.	*and who is not in love with me.*
De fine amour l'ai requise,	*I have courted her out of True Love,*
qui cuer et cors m'a espris,	*who has captured me body and soul,*
et s'ele n'en est esprise,	*and, if she too is not captured, it is*
pour mon grant mal la requis.	*my great misfortune that I court her.*
Mais la doleurs me devise	*But my grief reminds me that I have*
qu' la meilleur me sui pris	*addressed myself to the fairest lady*
qui ainc fust en cest mon prise ;	*who was ever found in this world;*
se j'estoie a son devis.	*if only I were to her liking.*
Tort a mon cuer qui s'en prise,	*My heart is wrong to seek her favour,*
quar ne sui pas si eslis.	*for I am not sufficiently exalted.*
S'ele eslit, qu'ele m'eslise !	*If she chooses any, let her choose me!*
Trop seroie de haut pris.	*Then I would be exalted indeed.*
Pour c'est drois s'Amours m'agree,	*Thus it is right—so help me Love—*
que mon cuer li ai douné.	*that I have given my heart to her.*
Se s'amour ne m'a dounee,	*Though she has not granted me love,*
tant la servirai a gré,	*I will serve her so willingly that,*
s'il plaist a la desirree,	*if the object of my desire so wishes,*
que un baisier a celé	*I shall have a secret kiss*
avrai de li a celee,	*from her in secret,*
que tant ai desirré.	*as I have desired for so long.*

4 Plus bele que flors / Quant revient / L'autrier jouer / FLOS FILIUS EIUS

The Quadruplum is an unusual one; it has a strict syllable count (all the lines having five syllables) and a rigorous ABAB rhyme-scheme throughout. This is matched in the setting. The minor triad which opens the piece—and the major triad which provides its penultimate sonority—shows the kind of strategic dissonance (for so these combinations of intervals were classified) that is to be found in the thirteenth-century motet. See the comments on tracks 6 and 13 below. On the whole, however, this is a remarkably restrained and mellifluous piece and one that reveals the beauty of sound which thirteenth-century composers often achieved.

Quadruplum

Plus bele que flors	*More beautiful than flowers,*
est, ce m'est avis,	*I believe,*
cele a cui m'atour.	*is she to whom I devote myself.*
Tant com soie vis,	*As long as I live,*
n'avra de m'amor	*none shall have the joy*
joie ne deliz	*and pleasure*
autre mes la flor	*of my love*
qu'est de paradis :	*save the flower of paradise:*
mere est au Seignor	*she is the mother of the Lord*
qui si nous a mis	*who put us in this world*
et nos au retour	*and who always wants us*
veut avoir tout dis.	*to return to him.*

Triplum

Quant revient et foille et flor	*When leaves and flowers return*
contre la saison d'est,	*and summer approaches,*
Diex ! adonc mi souvient d'amours	*God! then I think again of love*
qui tot jours	*which has always*
m'a cortoise et douce esté.	*been kind and sweet to me.*
Molt aim son secors,	*I love the solace of love,*
c'a ma volenté	*which contents me*
m'aliege de mes doulours.	*by relieving my suffering.*
Mout en vient biens et honours	*Much good and honour*
d'estre a son gré.	*come from serving Love.*

Motetus

L'autrier jouer m'en alai	*The other day*
par un destor ;	*I went to amuse myself*
en un vergier m'en entrai	*to a secluded place;*
por cuillir flor.	*I went into a garden to pick flowers.*
Dame plaisant i trovai,	*I found a fair lady there,*
cointe d'atour ;	*elegantly dressed;*
cors ot gai,	*she was pretty,*
si chantoit par grant esmai :	*yet she sang in great distress:*
« Amors ai,	*'I am in love;*
qu'en ferai ?	*what shall I do?*
C'est la fin, la fin,	*There is nothing for it:*
que que nus die, j'amerai. »	*whatever people say, I shall love.'*

FLOS FILIUS EIUS

5 Par un matinet / Hé, sire ! / Hé, bergier ! / EIUS

Here, as in track 2, are three closely related texts which welcome a sequential presentation. Isolating the three parts helps to emphasize how well formed they are and also how homogeneous is their style; they share a preference for stepwise motion, for a virtually identical range and tessitura, and for a shared repertoire of ornaments. When they are combined and each part competes for attention, we hear the kind of exhilarating tangle and clamour which was so attractive to thirteenth-century listeners, and which restores to the perfect consonances—where all the parts agree in fifths and octaves—the almost magical power which medieval music theory attributed to them.

Performing order

I *Quadruplum* ROGERS COVEY-CRUMP
II *Motetus* LEIGH NIXON
III *Triplum* RUFUS MÜLLER
IV All parts

Quadruplum

[The rustic, lascivious love of shepherds is disdained]

Par un matinet l'autrier	*The other morning*
oï chanter un fou bergier,	*I heard a foolish shepherd singing*
s'en sui esmuz,	*and I was annoyed,*
qui se vantoit qu'il ot geü	*for he boasted that he had lain*
tout nuz	*quite naked*
entre les deus braz s'amie.	*in the arms of his sweetheart.*
Il se vantoit de folie,	*This was a foolish boast,*
car tel amour est vilaine ;	*for love of this kind is disgraceful;*
mes j'ain certes plus	*but I am sure*
loialment que nus.	*that I love more nobly than any.*
Puis que bele dame m'aime,	*Since a fair lady loves me,*
je ne dement plus.	*I am no longer sad.*

Motetus

[Another speaker addresses the shepherd and envies his success]

Hé, bergier ! si grant envie	*Hey, shepherd! I am so envious*
j'ai de toi,	*of you*
de ce que si bone vie	*since you lead such a merry life*
as envers moi ;	*compared to me;*
onques loialté ne foi	*I have never found loyalty*
trover n'i poi	*or faithfulness*
la ou je l'ai deservie.	*where I have deserved it.*
Et toi, qui de rien servie	*But as for you who have*
n'as amours, joïr t'en voi	*done nothing to serve Love,*
et vanter toi:	*I see you rejoicing and boasting:*
« En l'aunai,	*'Beneath the alders,*
ju en l'aunai	*I lay beneath the alders*
os braz m'amie. »	*in the arms of my sweetheart.'*

Triplum
[The shepherd resents what he has just heard, and especially the way his own love-life has just been described]

Hé, sire ! qui vos vantez	*Hey, sir! you who boast*
que vos avez	*that you have*
deservie	*deserved*
cortoisie	*courtesy*
et loialté,	*and loyalty,*
tel folie	*do not say*
ne dites mie	*such a foolish thing*
qu'en vostre amie	*as that you have found*
tel vilanie	*such baseness*
aiez trouvé ;	*in your sweetheart;*
et reprové	*and you were wrong*
m'avez fausement,	*to accuse me*
c'onques amour	*of never*
nul jour	*having served*
ne servi loialment :	*Love loyally:*
Nunques mes ne les senti,	*I have never*
les maus d'amours,	*felt the pangs of love*
mes orendroit.	*till now.*

EIUS

6 De la virge Katerine / Quant froidure / Agmina milicie / AGMINA

In this piece the essential idea of the polytextual motet is carried to its limit. Here are three separate poems which speak of two different subjects in two different languages. Since the note-values of the Tenor are fairly long relative to those of the upper parts, there is a 'pedal' effect in many measures. There is a very clear contrast in the piece between a first section, where all the voices phrase together, and a second, where the phrases overlap and we sense that each part is struggling for mastery. The strategic placing of the penultimate dissonance—in this case an added sixth—produces a striking effect.

Quadruplum
De la virge Katerine chantera
chascun qui en Jhesuchrist fiance a ;
quant la virge en Dié si grant grace trouva
que nus mas, ne loing ne pres, cele ne l'avra.
Tant l'ama
que les trois corones a
que li destina
par desus le comun bien qu'a chaün douna
que sauvez sera:
car la foi Dieu preescha,
son cors de pechié garda,
en martyre devia.
Pour ce qu'elle sermona
et vie d'angle mena,
l'enporta
Nostres Sires par ses angles ou mont ou il bailla
la sainte loi qu'il dona
a ceus ou tant de bien a.
Tant m'otroi !
Et se vous me demandez pour quoi
je ai si grant foi,
a mon cuer le demandez, ne mie a moi.

Let all who believe in Jesus Christ
sing of the virgin Catherine;
since this virgin found such great grace in God
that she will suffer no evil, near or far.
He loved her so much
that she received the three crowns
which he destined for her,
in addition to the common gift
which he granted
to all who are destined for salvation:
for she preached the word of God,
kept her body from sin,
and died a martyr.
Because she preached and led an angelic life,
Our Lord had her taken up by his angels
to the mountain where he delivered the holy law
which he vouchsafed
to those who are full of goodness.
May he grant me the same!
And if you ask me
why I have such great faith,
ask my heart, not me.

Triplum

Quant froidure trait a fin	*As the cold weather*
encontre la seson	*comes to an end*
que chantent en leur latin	*and the season approaches*
par bois cil oiseillon,	*when the little birds*
et verdissent cil gardin,	*sing in their language in the woods,*
lors est bien raison	*and the gardens grow green,*
que je chant de cuer tres fin,	*then it is fitting that I should sing*
quar j'ai bone achoison,	*most sincerely, for I have good cause*
quant cele por qui je chant	*to do so since she of whom I sing*
m'a donee s'amor.	*has granted me her love.*
Bouche o grant savour	*Delightful mouth full of sweetness,*

plaine de douçour,
euz verz, face vermeilleite
de fresche colour ;
souz ses mamelettes
duretes,
blanches comme flour,
sa crine a sorete :
c'ain ne fu paintour,
nule chose n'est portraite
com cele est por qui je chant.
Diex ! je l'aim tant,
n'i puis durer :
bien sai que m'ocirra.
Diex ! qui li dira ?
Ne puis endurer
les maus que soufferz ai ja :
trop m'i fait comparer.
J'ai beu du boivre amer
dont Tristrans morut ja.
Je ne sai combien vivrai,
fors tant sanz plus com li plera.

green eyes,
rosy face
fresh of hue;
below her breasts,
firm,
white as flowers,
her fair hair hangs down;
never was there an artist,
never was anything painted
like her of whom I sing.
God! I love her so much
that I cannot last any longer;
I am sure it will kill me.
God! who will tell her?
I cannot bear the pains
which I have suffered already:
I pay too dearly for my love.
I have tasted the bitter drink
of which Tristran died long ago.
I do not know how long I may live:
just as long as it pleases her.

Motetus (text by Philippe the Chancellor)

Agmina milicie
celestis omnia
martyris victorie
occurrunt obvia.
Virginis eximie
laudant preconia,
rosam patiencie
pudoris lilia,
donum sapiencie,
legis eloquia.
Virgo regia
regis filia
Christum regem hodie
in celi regia
revelata facie
videt in gloria.
Christi hostie
patent ostia;
sapientum Grecie
facundie
sophismatum
et dogmatum
argucie
silent et studia.
Post hec stadia

All the troops
of the heavenly army
run forth to celebrate
the victory of the martyr.
They shout aloud
the praises of the peerless virgin,
the rose of patience,
the lily of modesty,
the gift of wisdom,
eloquent advocate of the Law.
The royal virgin,
the daughter of the king,
sees Christ the king
in the realm of heaven in glory
with his face revealed.
The gates stand open
to the victim for Christ;
the fluencies
of the Greek sages
and the arguments
of sophistries
and dogmas
and all their lucubrations
are silent.
After these contests

gaudet requie.
Carnis habet spolia
apex Arabie;
Caro caret carie,
Mens immundicia.
Oleum hec gracie
dat et precum suffragia.

she rejoices at rest.
The summit of Arabia [Mount Sinai]
has the spoils of her flesh;
her flesh is not decaying,
nor her mind impure.
She gives this oil of grace
and the intercession of prayers.

AGMINA

COLIN MUSET

7 Trop volentiers chanteroie

Trop volentiers chanteroie
se je savoie coment,
et bone vie menroie
se li siecles valoit tant
qui me tormente forment ;
et nomporqant tote voie
chanterai joieusement,
que Bone Amors lo m'aprent.

I would most willingly
sing if I knew how,
and would lead a happy life
if this world which mistreats me
so badly had any happiness to offer;
but still in spite of this
I will sing joyfully,
for True Love teaches me how.

Puis k'Amors vuet que je soie
liez et renvoisiez sovent
et mes fins cuers s'i outroie
si tres debonairement,
se li siecles se repent,
nule riens je n'i donroie,
ke Bone Amors me deffent
que ja n'aie cuer dolant.

Since Love wishes me to be happy
and cheerful often,
and my noble heart consents
to this with such good grace, if only
the world would mend its ways
I would not hold back,
for True Love forbids me
ever to have a heavy heart.

Se g'iere Deus, je feroie
lo siecle tot altrement,
et meillor gent i metroie,
car cist n'i valent neient.
Kant plus ont or et argent,
vair et gris et dras de soie,
tant sont moins large metant;
plus que jeus usure prent.

If I were God, I would
remake the world quite differently,
and put better people in it,
for these are quite worthless.
The more gold and silver they have,
the more furs and silken cloth,
the less generously they spend;
they are worse than a usurious Jew.

De Waignonrut la menroie
a Widemont maintenant.
Lo boen conte prieroie,
k'adès a lo cuer joiant ;
molt en dient bien la gent ;
au siecle a bien fait sa voie ;
que nus hom ne li deffant
tant con lo savront vivant.

I will turn at once
from Vignory to Vaudémont.
I would exhort the good Count,
whose heart is always cheerful;
people speak very well of him;
he has led a good life;
let none oppose him as long as
they know him to be alive.

8 Ave parens / Ad gratie / AVE MARIA

This is probably an English piece, like the next. It is the kind of lyrical, mellifluous hymn to the Virgin that English musicians produced easily (perhaps too easily) in the thirteenth century. Unlike the French pieces, it responds to an intonation closer to Just than Pythagorean.

Triplum

Ave parens	*Hail, mother*
prolis eximie,	*of a wondrous offspring,*
virgo carens	*virgin lacking*
carnali carie.	*in all fleshly corruption.*
Flos non arens	*You are a flower that never withers,*
es tu, lux curie,	*O light of the [heavenly] court,*
semper clarens	*always resplendant*
vernanti specie.	*and fresh as Spring.*
Stirps [m]arcebat	*The human stock*
humana crimine;	*was withered by sin;*
revirebat	*it became green once more*
virente germine;	*as the shoot began to blossom;*
flos florebat,	*the flower flourished*
florente virgine,	*as the virgin flowered*
dum latebat	*while God*
deus in homine.	*lay concealed in Man.*
Flos, odore	*O flower, whose fragrance*
fugans demonia,	*puts demons to flight,*
flos, candore	*O flower, surpassing*
lilia	*every lily*
et decore	*in whiteness*
precellens omnia,	*and beauty,*
nos amore	*bring us close to you*
tibi consocia	*in love,*
Maria.	*O Mary.*

Duplum

Ad gratie	*The retinue*
matris obsequia	*of the Church*
ecclesie	*rejoices in the rites*
gaudet familia.	*of the mother of grace.*
Rex hodie	*Today, the king*
dat matri gaudia	*gives joys to the mother*
ad superne curie	*who is borne aloft to the heights*
vehens sublimia;	*of the heavenly court;*
fit glorie	*she becomes*
regie	*the royal queen*
regina regia,	*of royal glory,*
leticie	*receiver of joy*
latrix egregia.	*in the sight of all.*
Milicie	*O celestial glory*
specie	*in the sight*
superna gloria,	*of the [heavenly] host,*
O nimie	*O subject*
laudis materia,	*for unceasing praise,*
progenie	*descendant*
regum prosapia,	*from the lineage of kings,*
mundicie	*leader*
primipilaria,	*in all that is pure,*
nos hodie	*come to us*
venie	*today,*
visita gracia	*O Mary,*
Maria.	*for the sake of forgiveness.*

AVE MARIA

9 Super te Jerusalem / Sed fulsit virginitas / PRIMUS TENOR / DOMINUS

This is either an English piece or a Continental one to which a fourth part has been added to produce a characteristically English triadic sonority. The text flows from the Triplum to the Duplum and therefore a sequential performance would have been possible, but we have opted for a simultaneous one with the lower two parts vocalized. Note the major triad which ends the piece, unthinkable in French music of the thirteenth century.

Triplum

Super te Jerusalem	*Over you, Jerusalem,*
de matre virgine	*God has arisen,*
ortus est in Bethleem	*becoming man*
deus in homine;	*of a virgin mother in Bethlehem;*
ut gygas substancie	*he came forth*
processit gemine	*like a giant of twin substance*
virginis ex utero	*from the virgin's womb*
sine gravamine.	*without pain.*
Non fuit feconditas	*This fertility was not caused*
hec viri semine …	*by the seed of a man …*
… sed fulsit virginitas	*… but her virginity took flame*
de sancto flamine.	*from the holy fire.*
Ergo, pie virginis	*Therefore, O merciful lord,*
flos, pie domine,	*flower of a merciful virgin,*
da medelam criminis	*give us the remedy for our sin*
matris pro nomine	*for the sake of your mother's name*

Duplum

ne nos preda demonis	*lest we, whom you have bought*
simus pro crimine	*with the river*
quos preciosi sanguinis	*of your precious blood,*
emisti flumine.	*become the devil's prey through sin.*

PRIMUS TENOR / DOMINUS

10 A vous douce debonnaire

A number of motet voices survive, detached from the motets to which they belong, and set down as free-standing secular songs. Here we have taken the Motetus of a two-part motet and present it as an independent song, first as it survives in a motet, and then with editorial ornaments based upon what can be deduced about thirteenth-centry ornamentation from musical and theoretical sources.

Performing order:
I *Motetus*
II *Motetus* with ornamentation

[*Motetus*]

A vous douce debonnaire,	*To you, sweet and courteous one*
restors de toute ma vie,	*who has restored my whole life,*
me complai[n]g de mes dolor[s]	*I complain of my sorrow and say*
et di, que ne sai que fere,	*that I do not know what to do*
se je n'ai la vostre aïe.	*unless you come to my aid.*
Aimi, bele douce amie,	*Alas! beautiful and sweet friend*
qui j'aim de loial amor ;	*whom I love with a loyal love,*
pour Diu, prengne voz envie	*for the love of God, may you soon*
ne conforter vostre ami !	*wish to comfort your friend!*
Si ferés comme loiale	*That would be a faithful gesture*
et seront li mal meri,	*and the pains that I have suffered*
que j'ai por vos, damoisele,	*for you, lady, would be recompensed,*
qu'autrement m'avés trai ;	*for otherwise you have betrayed me.*
si di :	*Thus I say*
« Aimi, aimi, Marotele,	*'Alas, alas Marotele,*
voz traiés fame de mi ! »	*you have captured my soul.'*

TENOR omitted

11 Mout souvent / Mout ai esté en dolour / MULIERUM

The opening duet of Motetus and Tenor shows how much delicious and carefully controlled counterpoint there is to be found in the two-part writing of the motet repertoire. Notice how the Tenor (here vocalized, as are all the Tenors on this recording) moves in very similar note values to the Motetus and often lies above it in pitch. The Motetus shows motet melody at its best: generously filling the best part of the voice, and full of lilt. When the Triplum enters the composer's scheme becomes clear, for this motet begins farily low in the two voices and then, towards the middle, moves its whole tessitura up a minor third and seems to linger there in that suspended way so characteristic of the motet. A pungent and sustained dissonance of a minor second, quite unlike anything else in the piece, prepares the final cadence.

Performing order
I Motetus RUFUS MÜLLER + MULIERUM
II All parts

Triplum

Mout souvent m'ont demandé plusours	*Time and again many people have asked me if I am in love,*
se j'aim, pour ce que je sui jolis.	*since I am so cheerful.*
Oïl, que j'aim la meillour	*Yes, for I love the best*
qui soil en tout cest païs.	*lady in all the land.*
Mout a biauté, ce m'est vis :	*I find her most beautiful;*
ses cors est poliz,	*she is of graceful bearing*
chief luisant, sorciz,	*with shining hair, fine eyebrows,*
biaus euz verz, menton bien asis,	*beautiful green eyes, well-shaped*
col plus blanc que ne soit flour de lis.	*chin and a neck which is whiter than lilies.*
Qu'en puis je, se je sui ses amis,	*How can I help being in love with her*
quant elle est si bele et si gentis	*when she is so beautiful, so gracious*
qu'en li ne faut fors mercis ?	*that she lacks nothing but mercy?*

Motetus

Mout ai esté en dolour	*I have suffered for a very long time*
longuement pour bien amer,	*for loving faithfully,*
et sui encor chascun jor ;	*and I suffer still each day;*
si ne m'en puis destourber,	*yet I cannot leave her,*
tant a douçour,	*for she has such sweetness,*
biauté, bonté, et cors gent de bel atour,	*beauty, goodness and such graceful bearing,*
euz rianz pour cuer navrer,	*smiling eyes which pierce my heart,*
douz vis, fresche colour.	*sweet face and fresh colouring.*
Je ne vi en li rien a blasmer,	*I have found nothing to criticize in her,*
fors que je ne puis merci trover ;	*except that I cannot obtain mercy;*
ensi me tient en langour,	*thus she keeps me languishing,*
ne ja pour ce ne partirai de s'amour.	*but nonetheless I cannot stop loving her.*

MULIERUM

BERNART DE VENTADORN

12 Can vei la lauzeta mover

Can vei la lauzeta mover	*When I see the lark unfurl his wings*
de joi sas alas contral rai,	*for joy against the sun's rays, and how*
que s'oblid'e.s laissa chazer	*he lingers and lets himself swoop down*
per la doussor c'al	*because of the sweetness*
cor li vai,	*that floods his heart,*
ai ! tan grans enveya m'en ve	*ah! I am filled with such great envy*
de cui qu'eu veya jauzion,	*towards all creatures I see rejoice;*
meravilhas ai, car desse	*I marvel that my heart does not*
lo cor de dezirer no.m fon.	*immediately melt with desire.*
Ai, las ! tan cuidava saber	*Alas! How much I thought I knew*
d'amor, e tan petit en sai !	*about love, and how little I know*
car eu d'amar no.m posc tener	*of it! I cannot keep myself from loving*
celeis don ja pro	*one from whom I will never have*
non aurai.	*any reward. She has taken*
tout m'a mo cor, e tout m'a me,	*from me my heart, myself, herself*
e se mezeis e tot lo mon ;	*and the whole world, and when she*
e can se'm tolc, no.m laisset re	*robs me she leaves me nothing*
mas dezirer e cor volon.	*but desire and a longing heart.*
Pus ab midons no.m pot valer	*Since entreaties, mercy, my rights*
precs ni merces ni.l dreihz qu'eu ai,	*cannot help me to win my lady,*
ni a leis no ven a plazer	*and since it does not please her that*
qu'eu l'am, ja mais no.lh o dirai.	*I speak of my love, I speak no more.*
assi.m part de leis e.m recre ;	*Thus I yield and leave her service;*
mort m'a, e per mort li respon,	*she has killed me, I reply with death.*
e vau m'en, pus ilh	*Since she will not have me*
no.m rete,	*in her service, I go wretched*
chaitius, en issilh, no sai on.	*into exile, I know not where.*
Tristans, ges no.n auretz de me,	*Tristran, you will hear no more*
qu'eu m'en vau, chaitius,	*of me for I am going wretched away,*
no sai on ;	*I know not where; I forsake*
de chanter me gic e.m recre,	*singing and withdraw from it,*
e de joi e d'amor m'escon.	*and I flee from love and joy.*

13 Quant voi l'aloete / Diex ! je ne m'en partiré ja / NEUMA

Compare the melodic style of the Triplum with Bernart's song.

Performing order:
I *Triplum* ROGERS COVEY-CRUMP
II All parts

Triplum

Quant voi l'aloete	*When I see the lark*
qui saut et volete	*swooping and soaring*
en l'air contremont,	*up in the air,*
adont me halete	*then my heart leaps*
le cuer, et semont,	*and exhorts me—Oh God!—*
Diex ! d'amer la plus bele del mont :	*to love the fairest lady in the world;*
les ieus a vairs, le chief a blont,	*her eyes are bright, her hair is blond,*
bele bouche et poli front,	*her mouth is fine and her forehead*
la char a blanchete	*smooth, her skin is fairer than the*
plus que la noif qui vient d'amont.	*snow which falls from above.*
S'est bele joenete,	*She is young and pretty, but the*
mes mesdisant grevé mi ont ;	*scandalmongers have slandered me;*
Diex leur pait leur dete,	*may God make them pay for it,*
si leur criet les ieus du front :	*may he tear the eyes*
adonques en pais seront	*out of their heads:*
amoretes.	*then love will be left in peace.*

Motetus

Diex ! je ne m'en partiré ja	*God! I will never*
de ma douce amiete,	*leave my fair sweetheart,*
qui tant est doucete :	*who is so very sweet;*
sa tres grant biauté soupris m'a,	*her great beauty has captivated me,*
et sa bele bouchete,	*her pretty little mouth*
sa tres douce gorgete.	*and her sweet little throat.*
Tot mon cuer m'embla	*She stole my heart away*
quant premiers a moi parla :	*the first time she spoke to me;*
tant la vi joliete	*she looked so pretty*
et si douce me sembla	*and her rosy little face*
sa face vermeillete,	*seemed so sweet*
qui si m'esprist et embrasca	*that my heart was enamoured*
le cuer soz la mamelete,	*and inflamed in my breast,*
que touz jourz mon cuer avra	*and my heart will always be hers,*
et plus renvoisiez en sera	*which will make her*
d'amoretes.	*all the more happy in love.*

NEUMA

14 En non Dieu / Quant voi la rose / NOBIS

This is one of the most closely wrought motets in the whole repertoire. The texts are interrelated to an extraordinary degree, sharing phrases, syntactical constructions and rhyme words. Some of these echoes are cunningly placed to mark points of melodic imitation (e.g. 'et le roussignol chanter' in the third line of both poems), for the melodies display as many interrelations as their texts.

Performing order
I *Motetus* RUFUS MÜLLER
II All parts

Triplum

En non Dieu, que que nus die,	*In God's name, whatever people say,*
quant voi l'erbe vert	*when I see the fresh green grass*
et le tens cler	*and the fine weather*

et le roussignol chanter,
adonc fine amour me prie
doucement d'une joliete chanter :
« Marion, laisse Robin pour
moi amer !
Bien me doi assés pener
et chapel de flours porter
pour si bele amie,
quant voi la rose espanie,
l'erbe vert et le tens cler. »

and the nightingale singing,
then true love compels me
to sing sweetly about a pretty girl:
'Marion, leave Robin
and love me!
I ought to try my best
and wear a wreath of flowers
for such a pretty sweetheart,
when I see the rose in bloom, the
fresh green grass and fine weather.'

Motetus
Quant voi la rose espanie,
l'erbe vert et le tens cler
et le roussignol chanter,
adonc fine amour m'envie
de joie faire et mener,
car qui n'aimme, il ne vit mie ;
por ce se doit on pener
d'avoir amours et amie
et servir et honourer,
qui en joie vuelt durer ;
en non Dieu, que que nus die,
au cuer mi tient li maus d'amer.

When I see the rose in bloom, the
fresh green grass and fine weather
and the nightingale singing,
then true love urges me
to be joyful, for he
who does not love does not live;
so anyone who wants lasting
happiness ought to try his best
to find love and a sweetheart
and to serve and honour them both.
In God's name, whatever people say,
the pangs of love assail my heart.

NOBIS

GAUTIER DE DARGIES

15 Autres que je ne sueill fas

Autres que je ne sueill fas
mon chant des autres mouvoir,
car ainc ne fui un jour las
d'amer celi mon pooir
qui si me tient en ses las :
de li ne me puis mouvoir.
Petit me vaut mes pourchaz ;
d'une chose la manas :
se je muir par son voloir
ce sera mauvez eschaz ;
mainz en avra de pooir.

Contrary to my usual custom I am
composing a song just like the others,
for never for a single day have I been
weary of loving to the best of my
power her who holds me in thrall;
I cannot leave her.
My pursuit of her is fruitless.
I warn her of one thing:
if I die by her wish,
it will be the worse for her;
her power will be diminished.

Ses gens cors et si bel braz
me font en s'amour manoir ;
ses simples vis, ses reguars
me sorent si decevoir
qu'en remirer son soulaz
ai mis trestout mon pooir ;
ne sui mie espris a gas :
se j'ai choisi haut ou bas,
je m'en doi trop bien doloir ;
quant plus serai clamez las,
plus devroie joie avoir.

Her fair body and her graceful arms
keep me in love with her;
her sincere expression and her look
deceived me so successfully
that I have devoted all my powers
to enjoying her company;
this is no frivolous infatuation.
Whether I have aimed high or low,
I have good cause for grief;
the more people think me wretched,
the more joyful I ought to be.

Sa façon a deviser
voudroie tous jours oïr ;
tant est bele, a li loer
nus hom n'en porroit mentir ;
pour ce n'en fais a blasmer
se me pain de li servir.
Vendre me puet u douner,
ses sers sui sanz rachater,
ne ja ne m'en quier franchir ;
mieuz aim ensi endurer
qu'un grant roiame a tenir.

I would like every day
to hear her appearance described.
She is so beautiful that in praising
her no one could overstep the truth;
I do not deserve to be criticized
for exerting myself in her service.
She may sell me or give me away,
I am her servant unconditionally
and wish never to be freed;
I prefer to suffer thus
than to rule a great kingdom.

16 Je m'en vois / Tels a mout / OMNES

Perhaps more than any other, this piece conveys that feeling of time standing still which seems to lie at the heart of the motet idea. The Tenor is a simple and very short musical phrase, constantly repeated, in which the note F predominates. As a result the piece is almost one long, decorated chord of F.

Performing order
I *Triplum* MARGARET PHILPOT + OMNES
II All parts

Triplum
Je m'en vois, ma douce amie,
si vous lais, ce poise moi,
qu'onques mais en ma vie
ne fis si grief departie.
Bien sai qu'on m'a encusé ;
mes s'om m'a sevré
de vo compagnie,
ne sont aillours mi pensé.
J'ains la bele, la blonde, la sage ;
tout li ai mon cuer donné.
Bien le tieng a assené ;
a son gré
faire en puet sa volenté ;
ne li fera fors bonté,
car pleinne est d'umilité.

I am going, my sweetheart,
and it grieves me to leave you,
for never in my life
was I so sorry to depart.
I know I have been criticized,
but though I have been separated
from your company
my thoughts are of none but you.
My love is pretty, blonde, well bred;
I have given my heart to her wholly.
I think him fortunate indeed:
he may enjoy himself
with her to his heart's content;
she will always treat him well
for she is full of humility.

Motetus
Tels a mout le cuer hardi
en cuidier et en penser,
qui l'a couart et failli
quant ce vient au demonstrer ;

Some men are bold enough
in thought and imagination,
but craven and cowardly
when it comes to action;

ce puet on bien esprouver	*this can easily be seen*
en amant ; pour moi le di,	*in a lover. I mean myself,*
qui soupris sui d'amer	*for I am stricken with love*
celi que j'onques ne vi	*for her whom I have never seen*
ses ieus envers mi tourner ;	*turn her eyes in my direction;*
si ne la puis oublier ;	*yet I cannot forget her;*
certes, ce poise mi,	*it grieves me indeed,*
car je l'ains tant et craing si	*for I love and fear her so much*
que ne sai comment a li	*that I do not know*
puisse parler.	*how I can possibly speak to her.*
Dieus ! je n'i os aler,	*Oh God! I dare not go to her;*
comment aroi merci ?	*how shall I obtain mercy?*

OMNES

17 Festa januaria

This is the one conductus on this recording. It shows the kind of sound which the motet composers were trying to replace with another, so very different.

Performing order
I Top part ROGERS COVEY-CRUMP
II All parts

Festa januaria	*The feasts of January*
festiva sunt festorum,	*are the festivities of all feasts,*
vera figuralia	*true symbols*
insignia signorum.	*and the most significant of signs.*
Hec luminum oblatio,	*This offering of lights*
hec est illuminatio	*is an illumination*
qua patet declaratio	*in which there is a declaration*
rataque rerum ratio.	*and a true understanding of things.*
[Sillabatim neumata	*[Let us therefore join musical*
proinde perstringamus	*phrases together, syllable by syllable,*
pariter organica;	*all of them equally polyphonic;*
ornate predicamus	*we proclaim in an ornamented fashion*
quod reseratur janua	*that the door is unbarred and that*
et complanantur ardua.	*the steep places have been levelled.*
Cantemus nunc melliflua	*Let us therefore sing honeyed things*
per festa januaria!]	*throughout the feasts of January!]*

[Second verse of text by Christopher Page]

All notes by CHRISTOPHER PAGE © 1990

A knowledge of the history of the motet can do much to enhance one's enjoyment of these pieces but cannot be discussed here. See the entry 'Motet' in *The New Grove*. For further information on the style of performance adopted for this recording, see Christopher Page, 'The performance of Ars Antiqua Motets', *Early Music*, 16 (1988), pp 147–164

All parts of motets are sung simultaneously unless otherwise indicated. The texts are usually laid out in ascending order of parts (Quadruplum, Triplum, Motetus, Tenor) unless a 'layered' performance is used following narrative sense; in that case the parts are presented in the order in which they are sung.

Translations are by Stephen Haynes (tracks 1–7, 11 and 13–16) and Christopher Page (tracks 6 [Latin text], 8–10, 12 and 17).

Special thanks to Ann Lewis and Mark Everist for much help and advice, and also to Duane Lakin-Thomas and Régine Page.

Recorded in the Church of the Hospital of St Cross, Winchester, on 21–23 March 1990
Recording Engineer TONY FAULKNER
Recording Producer MARTIN COMPTON
Executive Producers CECILE KELLY, EDWARD PERRY
℗ Hyperion Records Limited, London, 1990
© Hyperion Records Limited, London, 2007

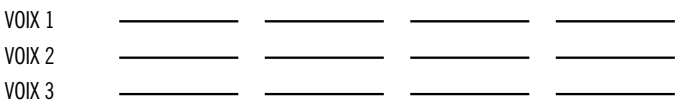
The front illustration is taken from a Bible illuminated in Paris *c*1250
London, British Library, MS Harley 1526, f.31r

LE MARIAGE DU CIEL ET DE L'ENFER

MOTETS ET CHANSONS DE LA FRANCE DU XIII^{e} SIÈCLE

SUR NOTRE COUVERTURE, un jeune clerc, peut-être un étudiant de l'Université de Paris, offre de l'argent à une jeune fille qui, à en juger d'après son tambour, s'en va prendre part à une ronde, à une carole. Sur la gauche, un démon libidineux guette, tandis qu'à droite un frère tient un exemplaire ouvert de l'Ancien Testament et lève la main en signe d'avertissement. Cette image parisienne est un bel emblème de la musique de ce disque : le motet du XIII^{e} siècle qui, comme l'étudiant et la jeune fille, se trouva pris entre la tentation du profane et l'appel du sacré—entre le Ciel et l'Enfer. Bien que née de la musique liturgique parisienne, la forme motet nous est parvenue avec tout un éventail de textes : dévots, lascifs, facétieux, mélancoliquement romantiques. Quant à la musique, elle a, pour sûr, fréquemment à voir avec les chansons des rondes (caroles).

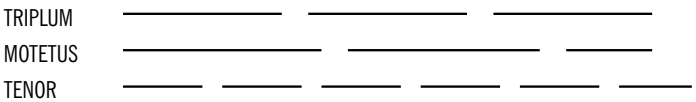
Cette musique est merveilleusement osée. Pour éprouver le caractère révolutionnaire de ces pièces composées entre 1210 et 1240 environ, il n'est que d'écouter un conductus comme *Festa januaria* 17 ou encore l'un des conducti polyphoniques enregistrés par les Gothic Voices sur le disque *Music for the Lion-Hearted King*. Ces œuvres sont généralement structurées ainsi :



Représentation schématique d'une section de conductus à trois parties

Ce diagramme met en lumière le fait suivant : dans un conductus polyphonique, chaque voix chante des phrases musicales de même longueur, des phrases qui entrent et sortent ensemble, tendant constamment vers des unités de quatre mesures. À cela, une raison : le conductus polyphonique est avant tout la récitation strictement mesurée (par deux, trois ou quatre voix) d'un texte latin souvent coulé dans des vers accentuels de quatre accents.

Le motet qui, apparu vers 1200, avait éclipsé le conductus en 1300, suivait un tout autre ensemble de principes :



Représentation schématique d'une section de motet à trois parties

Comme le montre ce diagramme, la partie de Tenor d'un motet (partie qui tire son nom du latin *tenere*, « tenir », le Tenor étant ce qui « tient » la pièce) était souvent arrangée en unités rythmiques courtes, stéréotypées et constamment répétées. Ce Tenor était habituellement une section de plain-chant, d'où les entrées latines dans les titres des motets enregistrés ici. Ces entrées, généralement présentes (mais pas toujours correctement identifiées) dans les sources, indiquent le mot ou la syllabe qui portaient à l'origine la mélodie du Tenor dans le plain-chant.

Or, tout ceci peut sembler un triste déclin par rapport aux idéaux humanistes du conductus, où le Tenor était en général une partie expansive et mélodieuse, fraîchement écrite par un compositeur s'ingéniant à produire (pour citer un musicien du XIII^{e} siècle) « une mélodie aussi belle qu'il se pourra ». Voilà qui montre seulement combien les changements de style artistique peuvent être paradoxaux, car l'itération d'unités rythmiques dans une petite section de plain-chant excita puissamment l'imagination des compositeurs, et des centaines de motets nous sont parvenus, qui utilisent cette technique. Surtout, peut-être, cette organisation du Tenor concourt à ce que le motet donne le sentiment, si caractéristique, d'être suspendu dans le temps : on entend que la pièce progresse et, pourtant, le Tenor, exerçant maints contrôles subtils sur le registre et le contenu des parties supérieures, ne cesse de tourner sur place, refusant de se développer.

Le diagramme de la structure du motet renferme un autre concept révolutionnaire : le chevauchement de phrases musicales. Réagissant contre le style et le son du conductus, le

motet exploite le délicieux sentiment de mouvement vers l'avant—et de rythme—qui survient lorsqu'une voix termine une phrase au moment même où une autre voix en entame une nouvelle.

Autre différence entre conductus et motet : dans le premier, les voix chantent les mêmes paroles, tandis que, dans le second, chaque voix dispose de son propre texte, voire de textes traitant de différents sujets, dans différentes langues (piste 6, par exemple). D'où une image sonore très éloignée de celle d'un conductus, où toutes les voyelles—et tous les changements vocaliques—sont synchronisées. On pourrait donc dire que, dans un conductus, les changements dans l'harmonie de la musique sont dramatisés par de brusques et unanimes changements d'harmoniques (chanter une voyelle, c'est placer le tractus vocal de manière à privilégier certains partiels dans la note). Dans le motet, en revanche, un accord peut renfermer deux, trois ou quatre voyelles distinctes et, comme les textes sont différents, il n'y a aucun changement de timbre vocalique simultané. En fait, la synchronisation de la couleur vocalique est si rare, dans le motet, qu'elle en devient un procédé artistique à part, comme à la fin de la piste 13, quand un motet s'achève résolument sur le Triplum et le Motetus chantant le mot « amorete », ou bien, comme dans plusieurs autres pièces, quand des syllabes identiques, de même sonorité, sont habilement disposées au même endroit, à toutes les voix.

De ce contraste, il résulte surtout que le conductus se prête fort bien à une déclamation franche et directe, l'unanimité du timbre vocalique produisant un ensemble éclatant de nuances primaires. Le motet, lui, possède, une fois interprété, une sonorité davantage voilée car les couleurs primaires des voyelles sont mélangées, et plus on mélange les couleurs, plus la teinte s'opacifie.

LE CONTEXTE DU MOTET

On ne doit pas servir cette musique-là devant la masse, car elle n'en perçoit pas la subtilité et ne se plaît pas à l'écouter, mais devant les lettrés et ceux qui recherchent les subtilités de l'art.

Ainsi s'exprime Johannes de Grocheio [Jean de Grouchy] dans son *De musica* (vers 1300). Johannes adorait Paris : ayant quitté sa Normandie, province de vastes domaines et de châteaux seigneuriaux où les grandes foires municipales constituaient les principales distractions, il trouva là une importante cité où « le pain du monde était cuit ». Ce dicton, courant dans les années 1200, ne se contentait pas d'assurer que tout allait bien sur les quais et les marchés de la Seine : il incarnait la fière affirmation selon laquelle Paris fournissait à toute l'Europe la théologie la plus rigoureuse et les conseils juridiques les plus avisés. De 1200 à 1300, les Parisiens offrirent à cette même Europe la musique polyphonique la plus inventive. Pour autant qu'on puisse dire, le motet, tel qu'il apparaît sur ce disque, fut une création parisienne et ces pièces ont été, à l'origine, interprétées soit à Paris, soit dans les cercles parisiens constitués d'hommes qui avaient fréquenté quelque temps les écoles de la ville avant de retourner chez eux ou dans leur communauté religieuse. Peut-être s'agissait-il de frères qui avaient étudié aux frais de leur ordre ou de membres d'un chapitre cathédral réunis dans une maison de l'enceinte. Johannes de Grocheio le dit bien : les motets s'adressaient aux lettrés ; en d'autres termes, ils n'étaient pas pour le peuple—pas pour les tanneurs, les charpentiers, les apothicaires—qui, lors des grandes fêtes, se pressait dans les églises de Saint-Gervais et de Saint-Leufroy.

Voilà qui est très bien, même s'il y a quelque chose de suspect dans l'idée, courante aujourd'hui, de motets destinés aux seuls intellectuels et connaisseurs. D'abord, il s'agit d'une idée empreinte d'anachronisme, qui nous fait risquer de confondre le musicien médiéval avec notre stéréotype du compositeur intellectuel, expérimentant la dissonance pour produire d'intenses miniatures destinées à la minorité sagace. Rappelons que les textes des motets sont souvent rédigés en langue vernanculaire et donc intelligibles à n'importe quel tanneur ou apothicaire ; au surplus, les textes enjoués et les mélodies à plusieurs parties vocales de ces œuvres n'étaient certainement pas sans lien avec l'idiome des chansons à danser (caroles), que les étudiants, les marchands et les filles de Paris glorifiaient à Saint-Germain (on est presque sûr que certains motets citent des fragments de chansons à danser, texte et musique). Bref, s'il est vrai que le répertoire du motet

renferme maintes subtilités musicales à l'intention de l'auditeur sagace, nous passons en grande partie à côté du plaisir de ces pièces si nous ne parvenons pas à renconnaître que leur ton caractéristique tient souvent à l'équilibre entre « sérieux et jeu », pour reprendre un bon mot de Chaucer.

MÉLODIE ET INTERPRÉTATION

Le « jeu » réside en partie dans la fluidité mélodique de nombre de ces pièces aux mélodies vocales lyriques instantanément accessibles et de caractère fort variable, il va sans dire, mais généralement avenantes, merveilleusement jaugées pour occuper la meilleure partie de la voix et si délicieusement phrasées qu'elles incarnent toutes les vertus tant célébrées dans la poésie du motet (*cler* et *legier*). Souvent, lorsqu'il interprète ces motets, le chanteur peut être ému par le rythme pur de la musique, une qualité que l'on ne prête habituellement pas à la polyphonie, quelle qu'elle soit, du XIII^{e} siècle.

Combiner dans une même composition deux, voire trois de ces mélodies, avec chacune son propre texte, constitua certainement un pas audacieux. Comment était-on supposé écouter une telle pièce ? D'aucuns ont suggéré que le motet mettait l'auditeur au défi de suivre tous les textes à la fois, mais cela semble peu probable. La compréhensibilité d'un texte, fût-il unique, est réduite quand il est chanté, la mélodie porteuse des mots ayant le pouvoir d'affaiblir l'attention discursive que nous donnons généralement au langage écrit ou prononcé. Si deux textes sont chantés en même temps, la pleine compréhension de chacun d'eux devient presque impossible, mais peut-être la principale source de plaisir était-elle ailleurs, dans le sentiment de diversité et d'invention absolues que nous éprouvons lorsque notre oreille discerne, dans le kaléidoscope de couleurs vocaliques, un moment d'un texte ou de l'autre. La clarté de timbre vocalique est, en réalité, un but cardinal quand on interprète ces motets, non seulement à cause d'une certaine tendance au voile inhérente à toute musique pluritextuelle, mais parce que, dans un motet, la couleur vocalique concourt pour beaucoup à l'affirmation d'indépendance de chaque ligne mélodique.

Dans cet enregistrement, nous avons tenté d'accuser l'aspect mélodique des motets en en interprétant certains en « couches », en présentant une voix ou l'ensemble des voix séparément, avec ou sans le Tenor, avant de les réunir. Cette pratique n'est mentionnée dans aucune source de l'époque mais elle s'accorde avec la nature séquentielle des textes des pistes [2], [5] et [9] (même si, dans ce dernier cas, nous n'avons opté que pour une interprétation simultanée). Lorsqu'elle est employée pour une pièce substantielle comme celle de la piste [5], cette technique vise à créer une expérience musico-poétique où mélodie monophonique, polyphonie, poésie lyrique et sens narratif s'unissent en quelque chose de bien plus grand—et de bien plus varié—que tout ce que peut suggérer une édition moderne de cette pièce. Ce style d'exécution peut être étendu aux motets dont les poèmes n'appellent pas de présentation séquentielle : comme les parties se déploient individuellement, nous prenons plaisir et à elles, et à l'anticipation du résultat final.

MOTETS ET CHANSONS DE TROUVÈRES

On a souvent avancé que la poésie française des motets était « dérivée de la poésie des trouvères », etc., mais ce genre d'arguments tait plus qu'il ne révèle. Certes, l'amour célébré dans les vers du motet ressemble souvent à l'*amor* des troubadours et des trouvères (l'amour-souffrance, la dame-médecin …), mais c'était ainsi que l'on parlait d'amour dans la poésie en vieux français, lyrique et narrative—ainsi et pas autrement. Alors, au lieu de chercher fallacieusement chez les trouvères les racines de la poésie du motet, mieux vaudrait s'attarder sur ce qui distingue le motet français de la chanson de trouvère. Avant 1240 environ, bien peu de trouvères renommés composèrent des poèmes comme ceux des motets français présentés ici : comparez les textes de n'importe quel motet français avec les chansons de Blondel de Nesle ou de Gautier de Dargies et les contrastes ne tarderont pas à apparaître. Les poèmes de trouvères reposent généralement sur un ensemble de stances identiques, et non sur un seul paragraphe aux vers de longueur extrêmement variable ; ils riment selon un schéma strict, et non de manière opportuniste ; leur rime, foncièrement discrète, n'est pas rendue bruyante par les itérations des voyelles antérieures (« i » et « e ») ; enfin, les chansons de

trouvères en style élevé sont des poèmes lyriques, ni narratifs ni semi-narratifs, qui évoquent les bergers et leurs amours agrestes. Les poèmes des motets, a contrario, affichent toutes les caractéristiques absentes des chansons de trouvères et marient une poésie avant tout courtoisement légère à une technique musicale savante. Comparez, par exemple, la classique chanson de troubadour *Can vei la lauzeta mover* 12 (Bernart de Ventadorn) avec la voix de motet dont le texte repose initialement sur cette chanson 13 : là où Bernart est expansif et sérieux, la voix de motet est légère et primesautière. Rien, absolument rien dans les sources du XIII^e^ siècle n'indique que les musiciens d'alors regardaient la grande chanson monophonique des troubadours et des trouvères comme une forme faible comparé au motet polyphonique ; au contraire, les chansons de trouvères du meilleur style furent de plus en plus associées, au XIII^e^ siècle, au souvenir des trouvères aristocrates de la première génération (ainsi Gace Brulé ou Gautier de Dargies) ; notre témoin parisien en matière de motet, Johannes de Grocheio, stipule que les chansons de trouvères doivent être interprétées devant un auditoire royal et princier. Conformément à la compréhension de la chanson vernaculaire qui se développa aux XII^e^ et XIII^e^ siècles, les motets vernaculaires, avec leur propension à des modèles mélodiques restreints et, entre autres, à des rimes guillerettes furent intrinsèquement légers et frivoles ; le paradoxe plaisant venait de ce que leur « jeu » était marié à une technique musicale des plus « sérieuses ».

CHRISTOPHER PAGE © 1990
Traduction HYPERION 2007

Remerciements particuliers à Ann Lewis et Mark Everist, qui m'ont beaucoup aidé et conseillé, ainsi qu'à Duane Lakin-Thomas et Régine Page.